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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005720

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GENEVA PLEASE PASS TO PRM A/S DEWEY  
DEPARTMENT FOR PRM, IO, EUR/SE, AND NEA/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/13/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#) [I2](#)

SUBJECT: MAKHMOUR REFUGEE CAMP: TURKS STRESS THE CAMP MUST  
CLOSE

REF: A. STATE 201785

[1](#)B. ANKARA 509

[1](#)C. BURGER-WYLLIE EMAILS 10/04/04 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Eric S. Edelman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S) Summary: Turkey remains ready to discuss a solution to the Makhmour refugee camp issue, but any solution must include the closure of the camp, MFA Deputy Under Secretary for Multilateral Affairs Nabi Sensoy told the Ambassador Oct.

[1](#)5. Sensoy was not explicit on whether Turkey will still insist on an official U.S. guarantee to provide security around the camp, but if that guarantee were to come instead from the IIG we believe the Turks would demand robust coalition liaison/support for the Iraqis. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) In the course of an Oct. 5 discussion on our approach to the IIG and the GOT regarding next steps against the PKK (reported septel), Ambassador raised the issue of the Makhmour refugee camp with MFA Deputy Under Secretary for Multilateral Affairs Nabi Sensoy. Ambassador reported that PRM A/S Dewey was to meet with GOT, IIG, and UNHCR representatives in Geneva on Oct. 7 with an eye to re-energizing efforts to begin an orderly repatriation process for the nearly 10,000 refugees there (per ref c). Sensoy responded that the GOT would be represented at this meeting by the Turkish Ambassador to their mission in Geneva.

[1](#)3. (C) Sensoy recalled that he had participated along with A/S Dewey in the negotiations last January to reach an agreement on Makhmour, and expressed regret that the USG had not met Turkey's request to provide a side letter from Secretary Powell pledging our support for the implementation

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of the deal, especially in terms of the security required to prevent PKK infiltration into the camp and intimidation of the residents there (see ref b for text of the agreement). Sensoy said he did not press for this letter over the course of the spring as he believed we were waiting for the June handover of sovereignty to the IIG to obviate the need for the side letter. What, Sensoy asked, will be the position of the U.S. in the Makhmour discussions now? What is the status of the side letter? Sensoy confirmed that, with one or two points of refinement, Turkey was ready to come to agreement on the draft text of January.

[1](#)4. (C) Sensoy emphasized that the GOT has one main goal in this process: the camp must close. Should Turkey participate in an agreement with the IIG and UNHCR, it would not want to see a scenario at the end of the day where the camp would still be open and subject to PKK infiltration. He said that those people in the camp who wish to return to Turkey can already do so at any time, but he allowed that the process outlined in the draft agreement would assist in ascertaining the free will of the residents. He added that it would be the responsibility of the IIG to care for the people who choose to remain in Iraq, but added again that this could not be in the context of the camp remaining in place. Finally, Sensoy wondered if time was now working against this effort, as winter was approaching.

[1](#)5. (S) Ambassador responded that the USG had not been sitting on the side letter issue in order to wait for the handover, but that regrettably the coalition had been compelled to deal with the insurgency in other parts of the country and did not have the resources to devote to providing security for Makhmour. He emphasized our appreciation that the GOT would work from January's draft agreement. On Turkey's desire that the camp should close, Ambassador replied that refugee camps--Makhmour included--should not be permanent, and that all sides must work together to ensure an orderly repatriation process. However, the camp's ultimate fate rests in the hands of UNHCR. In this issue, the key is to eliminate the fear factor. As part of our demarche to the IIG on dealing with the PKK, we have requested that the Iraqis patrol around Makhmour camp to deter the PKK from intimidating the residents (ref a). Ambassador added that perhaps the winter might actually help us; the harsh weather,

in combination with proposed IIG patrols, might serve to deter the PKK. The recent strong performance of the Iraqi security forces in Samarra gives us some reason to be more optimistic about the capability of the Iraqi security forces.

16. (S) Comment: Sensoy was not explicit on whether Turkey will still insist on a U.S. guarantee, such as a side letter from the Secretary, to seal the deal on Makhmour. We believe the only way Turkey would agree to back down from its demand for a U.S. guarantee is if the IIG not only agrees to monitor Makhmour but the monitoring takes place with robust coalition liaison/support. Absent these conditions, we will likely not gain Turkish cooperation. End comment.

17. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.  
EDELMAN